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We've done a poor job lately of making sure the chlorination level is right so the pool can be used. The FSS has decided to stop using a system that automatically added chlorine, to a manual system that we can better control. More work for our support staff, but a process that should ensure the pool stays useable.

**Q: I am retired Air Force and a civilian employee here on base. I know they used to give tickets for this problem years ago. Why do people pull up to the gate, turn off the vehicle head lights and then proceed to drive on base with parking lights only? Does not matter if it is foggy or dark. Are they looking to be in an accident? I would not want to be the person that causes the accident without your headlights on. I would think your insurance carrier would raise your premiums sky high.**

Folks turn off their lights when they can as a courtesy to our security forces. They should turn them back on later, but the occasional person who forgets does not create a threat to the installation large enough to require wing action.

**Q: Today at 5 a.m. I was again awakened by the Air Force testing jet engines. This went on for about an hour. Is it possible to do this testing at a more reasonable time? Please do not take this as a criticism of the base--I think everyone in Rapid City admires the job the base staff does. It just seems that 5 a.m. is just a little early for this type of noise. Thank you for your attention to this matter.**

Unfortunately, the health of the B-1 fleet doesn't allow us to be picky about when we work on the aircraft. Our maintainers work 24-hours a day getting aircraft ready to fly, not because they like to work all night, but because the mission requires it. The day you mention we were preparing an aircraft to deploy overseas later that morning. I understand your frustration--I live as close to runway as anybody--but please bear with us as we work to support the fight overseas.

**Q: I know that the commercial gate is just that, for commercial vehicles and not for regular traffic coming into the base. However I had an issue yesterday when leaving work that I hoped you could possibly clarify or provide guidance on.**

As I was exiting the base through the commercial gate as I do every day and realized that I had left my cell phone at my desk. So at the earliest opportunity I turned around and drove back to the gate. I handed my ID card to the gate guard and explained I had just exited and why I needed to return. He refused to let me enter and I was forced to drive back around to the main gate. There was no traffic entering the commercial gate at this time so I knew I was not

**interrupting commercial traffic flow. I just do not understand why I was refused re-entry. It does make sense why we cannot use this particular gate for normal traffic, but in unique situations I don't see why this would be a problem.**

**What is done is done and the easy fix is to not be so forgetful in the future. This just happened to really rub me the wrong way and I hoped that you could provide guidance for others in the future.**

The good news is that when the gate renovation is complete, you'll be able to use the commercial gate for entry all the time. But in the meantime, let's get real--I can't expect our security forces to parse how far you've gone out the gate before coming back. Should you be able to re-enter after 100 feet, 1000 feet, 1 mile, etc? Nor can the rule be traffic dependent as this would cause folks to "give it a try" and create the bottleneck vulnerability we're trying to avoid. While I understand your frustration, please just abide by the rule and enter from another gate until our construction is complete.

**Q: I recently PCS'd in from Elmendorf AFB where we just completed our ORI in October and passed with (I believe) an overall Outstanding. In light of the upcoming ORI, which is approx one week long, why are all the OREs so short? We practiced not only for the procedures of war-time but for the actual length and fatigue that followed a week of 12 hour shifts and chem gear. As a ORE player, I do appreciate the shorter exercises here, but I wonder if we might benefit from longer, more in depth ones in the long run? Thank you for your time.**

Don't worry, they're going to get a lot harder in the next few practices. The ORI fight is really only 48 hours (other days of transition activities) and you can expect future OREs to match the ORI's duration and intensity.

**Q: I like many others would like to separate fact from myth. The fish on the base ponds, are they edible or are they just for recreation? Thank you sir for your help.**

Yes they're safe to eat. In fact, the SD Game, Fish, and Parks stocks Heritage Lake twice a year with Rainbow Trout for this purpose.

**Q: Are there any future plans to repaint the parking lines in the base exchange/commissary parking lot? Without properly painted lines, individuals park as they would in the middle of a field at an outdoor concert. On numerous occasions, people have parked in the middle of driving lanes. This action will eventually lead to a vehicle-vehicle accident or even worse, a pedestrian-vehicle mishap. Thank you for taking the time to listen to this safety concern.**

Yes, the base exchange/commissary parking lot will be restriped when weather permits. Details are currently being worked to obtain funding and a contractor.

**Q: I was recently on leave and on the drive back to Ellsworth I took I-90 east back through South Dakota and I realized just how many wind mills we have here in the state. I also noticed that Douglas school systems also have a windmill on their property. I started thinking about why we are not using windmills to help cut our energy costs. Honestly I have traveled to many**

**different places and this is by far the most windy place I have ever been so it just seems like a smart thing to consider. Thank you for your time.**

We look for green energy sources to buy from (there are Air Force goals to keep moving this direction), but the Air Force isn't in the energy production business. Even places where you've seen energy projects on other bases, those projects are private ventures in partnership with the Air Force. While it does seem like there's plenty of wind to make wind energy

**Q: During a recent visit to the Holbrook Library I left very disappointed. We were trying to fill a Cub Scout achievement for my 7 year old son. I asked at the front desk how to obtain a library card for him and I was told he had to be 10 and have an ID. This was very frustrating to my son and I. My question is how can my son get a library card on base? He is going to be 8 years old this summer and is home schooled, so he does not get library visits at school. Reading is very important as well as being held responsible for the library books you check out. Ultimately it would be my husbands responsibility to pay for any items he checked out regardless of his age because he is the sponsor. It doesn't make sense that I would have to check the books out for him. Any other library he could get a card and be liable for the items he checks out. Being a military wife and veteran, I feel that I shouldn't have to take my son to another public library when there is one available on base. If you could please give me some guidance on this issue it would be greatly appreciated."**

In order for a child to get their own library card they must be 10-years old and have a valid military identification card. This is the same standard in all libraries throughout Air Combat Command. In comparison, the age limit for obtaining a library card at the Rapid City Library is 16.

**Q: Going to and from work every day I drive past the child development center. Most of the time the 15 mph light is flashing, so I slow to 15 mph. More and more often I have had issues with people tailgating me through this section. Following me close enough that I cannot see their vehicles' hoods in my rearview mirror. The last couple of weeks I've had people honk at me and even had one person yell out of their open window for me to hurry up. I slow down to 15 because I don't want a ticket or to hit someone else's child; I don't even have kids at the CDC. The most disturbing part to all this is the only people who have tailgated, honked, or yelled at me have, without fail, turned in at the CDC parking lot, presumably to pick-up their own children. I cannot believe the rudeness of these parents and would like them to understand I'm not going 15 mph to annoy them; I'm doing it so I don't hurt or kill THEIR kids.**

Thanks for following the speed limit. We'll keep a better eye on that area to help with enforcement.

**Q: Please do not take away a tradition of the reveille. I have lived in this area all my life. I have supported the military for as long as I can remember. But to take away the reveille at 6:30 a.m. because parent complains it wakes up her children? What about those of us who have children and remember the traditions we have grown up with. My daughter, who is very active with ROTC said to me this morning, but that is part of the base mom! I lay in bed of a morning to hear that, it gives me comfort knowing that they are right next door if something should happen. The same as hearing TAPS at bedtime. There has been many of mornings that we both have laid in bed waiting for that at 630. At night when we hear Taps, we remember those who have fallen. It is a tradition for many folks.**

**So please, don't take the tradition away just because someone's child might get woken up. What about those adults and kids that are use to that sound? That would be saying do not fly**

**the bombers at night because someone might be kept awake. There has been many of times they have flown over my apartment and brought me out of my bed. After I get my heart to beating back to normal, I remember, that's our Military hard at work and Thank God for them! Please reconsider and keep this part of our Military life.**

Please see previous responses.

**Q: I was wondering if there is or have been plans to get some healthier eating options on base. Currently we have Dakota's Club, Bandit Lanes, Burger King, Charley's and Anthony's Pizza and once you get directly off of base it doesn't get any better. None of these eateries promote a healthy eating diet for an occupation which is designed to be Fit to Fight. Any way we can get a Subway, Blimpie or even a Robin Hood like many other bases? Thank you very much for your time, have a great week.**

AAFES has worked hard to get a Subway or Blimpie's but neither have been interested. However, Dakotas has been offering a healthy option (in addition to salad) everyday on the buffet line for nearly a year now. One choice might be chicken fried steak with gravy, but the other would be something like a chicken breast, etc. We did this specifically to fill the gap in healthy lunch options.

**Q: I am sending this email in response to a post you have on the Commander Action Line regarding Reveille. When I first read this, I was deeply disturbed. Reveille is used to honor the United States flag as it is raised in the morning. This song has been used since 1812 with the United States Military. I feel it is un-patriotic to stop playing it because it wakes people up in the morning. I don't think I have to say this but this is a military installation. How many active duty, reserve, and veterans would be unhappy with this patriotic song not being played anymore? I have never been to a military installation that this song was not played at. If we change this military tradition for one person, what is next? The national anthem? I think this really needs to be reconsidered.**

Don't worry, the national anthem is safe.

**Q: I am concerned with the general lack of knowledge and understanding regarding mental health issues. As one who battles Major Depressive Disorder I have tried very hard to teach others about this issue. I do this, not to look for sympathy for myself, but to inspire others who may have issues to seek help. Most of the training we receive centers around suicide intervention (a very important topic indeed.) However, waiting to intervene at this point is much like waiting until a car doesn't run to take it to a mechanic. Many people don't understand the vast amount of different mental health disorders or their affects on the person dealing with them, their work centers, or their families.**

**While speaking with my counselor we discussed our mutual frustration at this situation. One solution that we discussed was to have a day of conversation regarding these topics. Perhaps a mental health professional could present information on a wide variety of mental health issues. Members on base who are dealing with these issues (or have in the past) could speak about their experiences. Open conversation would be encouraged instead of a standard briefing format. Thank you for your time and consideration on this matter.**

Just mentioned this morning at Spouse Appreciation Day some various opportunities for spouses to get a few different forms of counseling. We work hard to make sure folks are aware of various helping agencies on and off base—starting with those listed on our wingman card. Lately we have been heavily focused on suicide awareness because of our four suicides in 2009—a serious threat that does demand our attention. But that doesn't mean it's the only kind of counseling out there.

**Q: I constantly read the Commanders Actions Line questions, to see the issues and concerns that personnel have on this base. I was shocked when a spouse asked you “Why do we have Reveille every morning at 0630? It wakes up my kids and I would appreciate it if there was a way to get rid of it?” The answer to her question is on page 184 of Professional Development Guide (AFMAN 36-2241) Chapter 8 section 10. It's a ceremony honoring our flag and to signal the beginning of the official duty day. Reveille only plays for 110 seconds in the morning to honor our flag for those who have severed and still serve protecting and defending our great nation. I proudly serve my country as my family has done so for several generations before me. The flag is a symbol of sacrifice and freedom throughout the world and should be respected and treated as such.**

**I am not sure where we have lost sight to pay respect to our flag and the values it represents. I constantly hear talk about military and Air Force traditions and how important they are to us. This is one tradition I strongly believe should not go away for the convince/comfort of some. I have a recommendation for this issue. Instead of not playing reveille postpone playing reveille until 0700/0730.**

We honor the flag at Retreat and Taps and will continue to do so. If we were in the field it would be a good way to signal the beginning of the duty day, but in garrison this just doesn't happen.

**Q: I'm in a family with two military members. If I live in base housing, which BAH is taken? I'm also interested in what will happen when privatization comes in 2013—which BAH will be taken in that case?**

Today both members lose their BAH if they live in base housing. Right now it's not clear how this will be handled under privatization (comes around 2013). If you're referring to when the Centennial lease expires, that will be like any other downtown home, not “privatized housing.” BAH will be paid like any other home in Box Elder or Rapid City.

**Q: During a recent breakfast with you, you mentioned that the contractor of the soon-to-be former base housing is considering lowering the rent to less than the BAH rates. If this happens, there could be a drop in the average rent for the local area. Is it a possibility that this could affect/drop our current BAH rates during the next adjustment? I would hope this is not the case as it is tough enough now to find a place to rent with the current BAH rates. Thank you for your time.**

The BAH assessment process is a bit complicated, but suffice it to say the local area considered is more than just Box Elder. Bottom line, there is no way to predict if the average rent will go down for the area or how it will affect the current BAH rates, and cheaper housing for nearly 700 military families is a good thing.

**Q: I was recently on leave and on the drive back to Ellsworth**

**I took I-90 east back through South Dakota and I realized just how many wind mills we have here in the state. I also noticed that Douglas school systems also have a windmill on their property. I started thinking about why we are not using windmills to help cut our energy costs. Honestly I have traveled to many different places and this is by far the windiest place I have ever been so it just seems like a smart thing to consider. Thank you for your time.**

We look for green energy sources to buy from (there are Air Force goals to keep moving this direction), but the Air Force isn't in the energy production business. Even places where you've seen energy projects on other bases, those projects are private ventures in partnership with the Air Force. While it does seem like there's plenty of wind to make wind energy profitable here, there are apparently other barriers to entry that are problematic. We will continue to look to buy or support green energy development as industry makes it available.

**Q: I am a mother of two and when I first arrived here I called to find out if there was a play group here on base. I feel like it is the one place you can take small children and meet new people weather you have been here for years or a week like I was and still fit in. When I walked in the entire place was full which was nice to see but there is not enough room for everyone. I have been going for about a year now and I feel it has gotten worse. Since it is at the chapel activities center the toys we play with are the ones everyone plays with so we cannot keep up on sanitizing them. That means our kids are always always sick. We mothers want to get out and have our young children exposed to others but it has almost become not enjoyable. I hear people say that it is there one time a week that they get out with their kids to play during the cold winter. Sometimes we will have over 40 people there in this tiny room. So we know it is a very need group but maybe a building that would better suit the needs a more permanent place. I know there is a really nice play facility at the off base housing. Where will all those toys and things go since the base doesn't own it anymore? It is much needed here. Thank you so much for your time.**

As you are aware, our Dakota Ridge housing lease will expire this fall along with the community center. To determine the best disposition of the toys and equipment in that facility, our housing office personnel met with representatives from Family Services, "Partners in Play" and "Morning Out for Moms." We've determined that the best location to move these items to would be the Centennial Estates community center. We're still working some details and timing, but check with our housing office at 385-2568 if you are interested in using this facility.

**Q: Why isn't the base paper delivered anymore?**

The Patriot is currently delivered to 54 locations on base and they are free. But, it's not really a "base paper." The Patriot is a non-DoD publication the Rapid City Journal produces for an audience with an interest in military related news. They pull their stories from our base Web site, [www.ellsworth.af.mil](http://www.ellsworth.af.mil), and others and sell the ad space to local businesses to advertise their products or services. While we have a say in what publications come through our gates, we really have little control on what the publisher puts in the Patriot.



**Q: Sir, a few months ago I received notice that I was going to have to start paying Box Elder taxes on my cable bill. I live in Prairie View and am aware that Centennial housing has been annexed by Box Elder but was not aware that my housing area had been annexed. I still have EAFB as my address and do not believe I should be paying these taxes. Can you look into this, Thanks!**

All base housing was annexed to Box Elder, so all residents pay this on their cable bill.

**Q: Some of the folks in my work section have been talking about how nice it would be to have a breakfast at the club. Any chance of this coming in the future?**

No. We've tried this at least three times in the past, even when we had four wings and 10K people, but each time it failed to get the turn out to keep it going (it lost too much money). It also competes directly with the Bowling Center's breakfast, which is good, and cheap.

**Q: Visiting Ellsworth AFB, I was in the Commissary deli section on Sunday, 17 April about 1630. During the purchase of a cooked chicken, the counter attendant shared that upon closing the remaining cooked chickens (five) would be discarded within a few hours, simply thrown into the trash. As this is but one of many perishable products carried by the Commissary, I can envision many other items being discarded in a similar manner.**

**Being unfamiliar with local rules/regs/laws, I turn to you to see if a procedure might be implemented in which base personnel, many of whom are very tight budgets, might have the opportunity to obtain these still edible items before they hit the dumpster. I thank you in advance for your time and look forward to a positive answer that would help our cash strapped uniformed personnel.**

AAFES keeps food the allowable time, but at the end of that time has to throw it away to keep from making folks sick. They try to eliminate that waste by cutting prices as the clock runs out, but don't really have a way to eliminate some waste--if the food is still good they're trying to sell it, if it's not they have to throw it away.

**Q: Why do we have Reveille every morning at 0630? It wakes up my kids and I would appreciate it if there was a way to get rid of it?**

After checking the AFIs, we haven't found any guidance directing us to play Reveille, nor do we perform any actions based on it being played, nor does it honor anyone (like Taps). For that reason we'll no longer play Reveille. We will continue to play Taps as that honors our fallen warriors.

**Q: Until recently I was under the impression that certain breeds of Dogs including pit bulls were banned in base housing. Recently there was an attack in our neighborhood by a pit pull which we later found lives a few blocks away. The pit bull attacked one of our neighbors dogs who was contained in the fenced backyard, which the pit bull effortlessly jumped over. Luckily the owner of the attacked dog was there to pull the pit bull off of his dog. Even more lucky, the pit bull was attacking a dog, and not a small child. I have 2 small children, and I am very concerned that the base is allowing these known vicious, aggressive breeds to be in base housing. There are countless neighborhoods where these breeds are banned and I was just wondering why the base isn't one of them anymore????**

We don't discriminate based on breed, we discriminate based on behavior. While some breeds may have a tendency toward more aggressiveness, behavior is also a function of how the dog is raised,

trained, and handled. The bottom-line is that the owner is ultimately responsible for the actions of their pets. If a situation such as the one you describe occurs you should immediately notify Security Forces who will in turn respond and make appropriate contacts to our local Pet Control office if necessary. You should also report any aggressive incidents to the housing office who can then follow-up to ensure the pet in question has been properly registered with our Base Veterinary office and take other actions as appropriate. If you have questions about this policy or implementation, please feel free to contact the housing office at (605) 385-2568.

**Q: Sir – Recently, the dorms have been hotter than normal, is there any way to lower the temperature?**

We've lowered the outside air temperature at which the air turns on by 10 degrees. If your room is still hot you should discuss with the dorm manager or call CE customer service to have it looked at.

**Q: Sir - with the latest news stirring I have a question about the military policy on homosexuals in the military.**

**I thought prior to "Don't Ask-Don't Tell," the policy was that gay people could not be in the military period. Then Mr. Clinton brought in the "Don't Ask-Don't Tell" policy which I thought said gay people could be in the military as long as they didn't "tell" anyone they were gay and no one was allowed to "ask" them.**

**With the Don't Ask-Don't Tell policy being rescinded...wouldn't we go back to the rule in place prior to the Don't Ask-Don't Tell rule?**

**My interpretation of the rule, past and present, could be completely wrong. I just want to know the correct answers. I anticipate the discussions are going to be heated in the near future and it would be beneficial to everyone to understand what the change will in fact mean to the average American. Thank you.**

There's a lot of discussion going on at senior policy levels, but the short answer is: policy on homosexual conduct is codified in law (not just policy) and we follow the law. If and when the law changes we will respond to that change. While DoD is studying the issue (through Dec 10), and there's a lot of discussion in Congress and Washington about the future, the law hasn't changed yet.

**Q: Why are the gates to the soccer field by the school locked?**

Apparently, at some point we had some problems with folks not taking care of these fields and they got locked. However, we've now unlocked them and will monitor to make sure they are being cared for. If you find them locked, you can always contact Ms. Angie Gadowski, (605) 384-2277, for the key.

**Q: Why can't Airmen do grappling or martial arts at the fitness center?**

We've made sure the fitness center staff knows you can. If you want to reserve the multi-purpose room in the Bellamy Fitness Center for grappling or martial arts activities, you just need to fill out a liability form. If you're an instructor and want to teach classes, speak with our fitness center staff to get it on the monthly activities calendar.

**Q: Are we serving meals at the right times during the OREs? Not very many people are eating them.**



During the past 3 OREs, FSS has served hot meals at the Field Kitchen for Breakfast and Dinner meals. We're already planning to move the hot meal times to Lunch and Midnight meals for the July ORE to gauge participation. We'll continue to try to find ways to get more meals to more people. We're also discussing different locations that may be better. Profitable here, there are apparently other barriers to entry that are problematic. We will continue to look to buy or support green energy development as industry makes it available.

**Q: Sir, I was wondering if the fitness center could become a 24hr gym. I am currently on swing shift and I would rather go to the gym after work rather than before but the gym is only open until 11pm. I know the guys on my shift feel the same along with a lot of maintenance personnel. I think even if they could have it open Mon-Thur 24hrs and Friday close at maybe 0000. Please let us know. Thank You for your time.**

The bottom line is we aren't manned to be able to support 24 hr operations at the Fitness Center so we have to make some choices. The current primary hours of 0430-2300 support use for swing shifters before duty, and mid shifters before or after duty. If you still prefer to work out at the later times, the Pride Hangar is available 24 hours a day. I realize there aren't any weights there but, as I mentioned, we have to make some choices.

**Q: I recently arrived at Ellsworth and one of the first things I was shocked to find out was the outrageous number of DUI's. It seems like the punishments that are out now are not "scaring" the individuals into not making dumb decisions to drink and drive. At the last base I was at (Sheppard) seemed to have a good idea for the airmen in tech school whom got a DUI. They basically used public humiliation, in the evening and on weekends the individuals whom got DUI's had to stand at the main gate entrance and hold a sign that said "Don't Drink and Drive". It doesn't seem like much of a punishment but I think it helped because the airmen didn't want their friends and people they didn't know have to see them at the gate holding a sign. This is merely a suggestion, but it may help.**

I absolutely agree that our DUI problem is one deserving of every Airman's attention. While shedding light on this problem has value, I'm convinced that punishment alone (while appropriate) won't generate the outcome we're looking for. We need leadership at all levels of the wing by thousands of Airmen to build the right culture. Leaders that won't look the other way when they hear a story Monday morning or emotionally reward wrong behavior with laughs and smiles. While building culture is primarily a commander's responsibility, they need help from the other leaders in their unit--NCOs, front line supervisors, etc. Units stop DUIs when their true leaders stand up and say "enough--we've gone too far and I'm too proud to let this go any farther."

**Q: Sir, I'm noticing a lot of speeding vehicles on my street and there's lots of children playing outside in the warmer weather. Can we do anything to encourage residents to slow down?**

Security Forces have stepped up enforcement in our housing areas in order to curtail speeders. In just the past few days, they've cited several individuals for doing nearly double the speed limit in our housing areas where the posted speed limit is 15 mph. We'll continue to work to get this under better control.

**Q: I've been having a problem with dogs running loose in base housing, dogs being abandoned in the back yard, and pets doing their business and no one cleaning it up. I have talked to the owners and nothing is getting resolved. Normally this occurs at night time, after the housing office is closed. I have asked them several times the following day what I need to do in order for this problem to be remedied. Their answer is always "Call the SPs." When I call, Security Forces says there is nothing they can do. They are not there to take care of dogs running loose in the streets or abandoned in the back yard. I talked with a friend of mine in SFS and he says that Animal Control charges \$300 for every call that they get. I'm getting frustrated because they put so many rules on us, and don't bother to take care of these safety issues.**

We've clarified the procedures with our security forces, and reminded them of who they should call (city animal control) in this situation. In the future, when you call security forces (385-4001) they will get it handled (at no cost to you). Thanks for bringing this to our attention.

**Q: I would like to know why the CE and Utility shops couldn't work together to keep the indoor pool on base open. When they are called, they don't always go and check out the problem. They forget about the calls. That pool is not just for little kids to splash around in, as they believe. Doctors, downtown and on base, send their patients there to do physical therapy that would be more difficult on dry land. It has been closed the past three weekends because of low chemical levels and of course nothing gets done over a weekend. Of course that leads to the pool being closed on Mondays also, at least for half the day. We pay for our season passes with good faith that we will be able to use the pool during its normal operating hours. But lately, we have not been allowed to do so. Could you please look into this matter? Thank you for your time.**

We've done a poor job lately of making sure the chlorination level is right so the pool can be used. The FSS has decided to stop using a system that automatically added chlorine, to a manual system that we can better control. More work for our support staff, but a process that should ensure the pool stays useable.